

Health & Hospitals

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita damaged approximately 550 buildings in Louisiana related to health care, including 150 educational medical research laboratories and hospitals (over 1800 beds). The public health care system of Louisiana lost its only tertiary referral hospital and the Level 1 Trauma Center that served southeast Louisiana (Charity Hospital in New Orleans). Without adequate facilities close by, residents of South Louisiana had to seek health care at impractical, even life-threatening, distances.

The public healthcare system is providing interim services through a tertiary referral hospital and Level 1 Trauma Center at the reconfigured University Hospital location in New Orleans. Lower Cameron Parish Hospital, in the western portion of the State, is being replaced, and construction is underway on the replacement hospital. Plaquemines Parish Hospital, located in the southeastern portion of the State, is planning to relocate due to a demographic shift. Design of the replacement facility is underway. Both Lower Cameron and Plaquemines Hospitals are currently providing health care from temporary facilities provided under the PA program.

The opening of temporary facilities, and the design and construction of replacement hospitals, mark milestones in the recovery of the health care system of south Louisiana.

Of the 550 storm-damaged buildings, nearly 500 are back in service. FEMA has obligated (paid to the state) \$442 million of the estimated \$503 million dollars needed. With 88% of total estimated funds in state hands, the recovery is well underway. The state of Louisiana has disbursed \$214 million to medical facilities for various projects. There are only ten buildings unoccupied which the owner/occupant has expressed intent to return.